



Kennel Connection

See Page 3 For Adoptable Pets Available Now!

Vol. 1 Issue 1

Newsletter of Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

Spring 2015

When her owners relinquished her to Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center (FCAC) in July 2013, the 4-year-old terrier mix named Maya was suffering from an injury she had sustained when hit by a car and was within two days of giving birth. The injury, partial nerve paralysis of her right, front leg, caused her to walk on the part of her leg that is equivalent to the human wrist. Acting quickly, shelter staff found a foster home for Maya, where she raised her pups until they were old enough to be adopted.

Once her pups had gone to their own forever homes, it was time to focus on Maya. In November 2013, Dr. Tommy Walker of D.C. Vets, Inc., performed carpal arthrodesis surgery, at a cost to FCAC of \$2,000. However, the successful surgical procedure proved to be only the beginning of Maya's long recovery process. The follow-up care provided by Maya's foster family and veterinarians was extensive and well beyond the estimated timeframe. For months, Maya's activity had to be restricted to ensure proper healing. Her foster family carefully monitored her caloric intake and weight and brought her to FCAC once or twice per week for bandage changes to ensure that the surgery site remained free of infection.

Faith and Strength

Physical therapy would be crucial to Maya's recovery. Once Maya no longer needed to wear a bandage, we reached out to Dr. Faith Lotsikas of Faithful Paws Veterinary. At her first exam, says Dr. Lotsikas, "Maya was 'polite' but by no means outgoing and friendly towards me." The diminutive dog did not make eye contact with Dr. Lotsikas and refused to take treats from her. On that first day, Dr. Lotsikas could not have predicted the course of her journey with Maya.

At this point, Maya's right front leg was still in the healing stages, and she was not yet able to bear weight on her paw. Dr. Lotsikas used manual physical therapy techniques and laser



therapy and taught Maya's foster care provider, Bonnie, how to do exercises with the dog at home to help her regain flexibility and strength. Gradually, Maya showed improvement and began to use her limb again.

Dr. Lotsikas notes that Maya had challenges throughout her recovery. Her carpus would not fuse completely, which made walking painful. She also continued to need strength exercises, massage, and a supportive soft brace to go for walks. Bonnie provided Maya with

the exercises recommended, even putting her on a boogie board in the bathtub to help the dog regain balance. "It was hard to predict her long-term outcome as far as future medical needs," recalls Dr. Lotsikas.

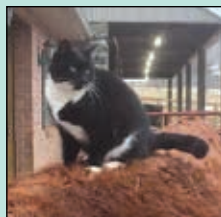
Coming Home

Throughout Maya's recovery, FCAC staff posted updates on our website and on social media in hopes of finding her a loving forever home. Despite our best efforts, a suitable adopter had not come forward for Maya, even a year after she came to us. For everyone involved in Maya's care and recovery, the ultimate goal was, of course, to place this resilient little dog, once fully recovered, with someone who would love and care for her, who would treat her like family and never allow her to suffer as she had.

And then something happened that changed everything for Maya. "One summer day," says Dr. Lotsikas, "because my kids were out of school, they had to come with me to take care of Maya. I got a wonderful surprise when Maya came in and saw them—the tail started wagging and she clearly wanted them to talk to her and pet her." Though Maya had never turned on the charm with Dr. Lotsikas herself—no puppy dog eyes, no slobbery kisses, no thumping tail—on this day, she says, "I finally caught a glimpse of the real dog inside Maya."

Dr. Lotsikas found it hard to shake the memory of that day—how her children and Maya lit up when they saw each other. She wondered whether Maya could possibly fit into her family. They were as busy as everyone else, juggling family and work; their border collie Kelsea was nervous around other non-border collie dogs; and they had two geriatric cats. But, having lost a beloved dog a year earlier, Dr. Lotsikas and her family may have needed Maya in their lives. And Maya could certainly do no better than this family, considering that Dr. Lotsikas and her husband are both veterinarians—one specializing in reha-

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From shelter to wide open spaces

See pages 4-5

Letter from the Director

by Linda Shea

"Helping one animal won't change the world . . . but it will change the world for that one animal."

This quote, which has been part of my signature line for years, is what drives us here at the shelter. For all of us—staff, volunteers, and foster families—the potential to see even a single animal leave the shelter, shake off a sad or difficult past, and begin its new life is what keeps us going.

Our shelter takes in an average of 14 animals each day; last year a total of 4,900 animals came through our doors. These animals do not arrive here by choice: approximately half arrive as strays and half are turned in by their owners. They include a variety of species, breeds, colors, sizes, and ages and arrive with a wide range of body conditions and temperaments. Despite their many differences, they all have one thing in common: they are in an unfamiliar place with an unknown future.

Our mission statement has three major components: to prevent the mistreatment of animals, to shelter homeless animals, and to educate the public on all animal issues. In addition to the basic standard of care we provide each animal, our shelter is very progressive. We evaluate what we feed on a regular basis, we offer enrichment to animals of all species, and we continue to be open-minded and willing to consider changes in housing accommodations to keep our animals comfortable and safe. Perhaps most importantly—and most surprising to many Frederick County residents—healthy, adoptable animals do not have "expiration dates" at our shelter. Rather, we strive to euthanize only those animals that have serious health problems or are unsuitable as pets for behavioral reasons.

The success of any shelter is a direct result of the collaborative efforts of animal advocates within the shelter and around the community. Thank you to those who, through their compassion for animals and support for our shelter, help us change the world for one animal at a time.

■ Linda Shea is Acting Director, Frederick County Animal Control.

Frederick County Animal Shelter & Pet Adoption Center

1832 Rosemont Avenue
Frederick, MD 21702
301-600-1546

<http://frederickcountymd.gov/15/Animal-Control>

Frederick County Animal Control Supervisory Team

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Want to Help Homeless Animals? Here's How

Adopt

If you're considering adding a new furry family member to your home, the Frederick County Animal Shelter & Pet Adoption Center is the best place to start. You'll be saving a life and enhancing your own!

Check out our adoptable pets on www.frederick.petfinder.com or www.petango.com/fcac. Or just come on over! Some animals are adopted before we have a chance to post their photos online. You may visit the shelter, at 1832 Rosemont Avenue in Frederick, during our animal visitation hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Donate

We always need materials like towels, blankets, toys, and other items. Please see our website for a complete list of needed items. Or consider donating a monetary gift or a gift card to a pet store or grocery store. To make an online donation, go to <https://www.velocitypayment.com/client/frederickcountymd/donations/index.html> and select "Animal Control" as the agency.

Questions? Call us at 301-600-1546, email us (animalcontrol@frederickcountymd.gov), or come in and talk to us.

Volunteer

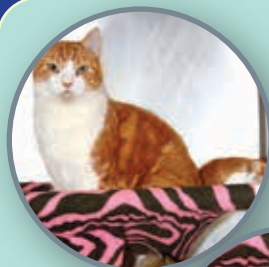
If you can volunteer at the shelter, we would love to have you. The shelter is an exciting place where you can really make a difference! Volunteers can help in a wide variety of ways, such as walking dogs and petting cats, feeding and cleaning up after animals, assisting potential adopters, or providing temporary foster care in your home for a shelter animal.

The first step to becoming a volunteer is to attend a non-committal orientation session. Contact our volunteer coordinator, Shawn Snyder (301-600-1319, ssnyder@frederickcountymd.gov), if you have questions about the program or to find out when the next orientation session will be held.

Our Mission: To prevent cruelty, abuse, and neglect of animals in Frederick County by enforcing all state, county, and city ordinances to the fullest extent possible. We will shelter homeless animals and attempt to place them in safe and loving home environments. We will educate the public on all animal issues to foster a more aware and caring community.

Featured Shelter Pets

These are just a few of the animals who are looking for their forever homes. View all of our adoptable pets on Petfinder (www.frederick.petfinder.com) or Petango (www.petango.com/fcac). Or stop by for a visit—you never know, you might just find true love!



BCFF (Best Cat Friends Forever)

These two super-sweet boys came in together as bonded strays. We don't know when or where they met, but they're best buds now, so we've promised them they'll get to stay together. Barry is the gorgeous red tabby, about 10 years old. He's the more outgoing of the two. Oliver, the 7- or 8-year-old seal point Siamese mix, may hang back a bit, but he likes to people watch when he's not snuggled up under his rug. Come in and meet these boys—you'll be glad you did!



So Nice They Named Him Twice

Why is this handsome fellow still here? JJ has been at the shelter for more than 4 months! True, he's a little shy with visitors. But hey, you'd probably be a tad aloof if your family moved away and decided they couldn't take you with them. Give JJ a few minutes and he'll turn on the purr. JJ is only 2 years old; rides well in a car; and gets along with kids, dogs, and other cats. Will you commit to this guy for the rest of his life?



Peace for Petunia?

What we know of this beagle's story began in December, when she was hit by a car on I-270. After help from a good Samaritan and a veterinarian, Petunia wound up at the shelter. She was adopted after a few weeks, only to be returned to the shelter 2 months later. Apparently, Petunia is very anxious, to the point of being unable to sleep at night. Of course, with all of the recent, confusing changes in her life, it's no wonder she's having a hard time. This approximately 9-year-old girl needs a patient person or family who can provide some stability in her life ... and lots of time outside in a securely fenced yard.



Looking for Somebunny to Love?

Meet Miko and Turnip! Both have been here at the shelter, waiting for their forever homes, for several months. Miko, a 5-year-old lionhead mix, was brought to the shelter when one of his owners developed an allergy to rabbits. He was adopted, but now is back again for the same reason. Turnip is a mini rex, about 1 year old. He came from a breeder who wasn't able to find a buyer for Turnip. Not sure how to care for a rabbit? We can fill you in—just ask!



Need a Little Sugar?

When her owner could no longer care for her, Sweetie found herself in the market for a forever home. But because she's a little shy and isn't a kitten anymore, Sweetie has been overlooked by shelter visitors for more than 3 months. This 8- to 10-year-old beauty with intense green eyes is looking for a patient person or family who will give her some time to come out of her shell. She's also hoping for a home with a nice bed or three ... and someone who'd be willing to occasionally take the time to pet her while she eats. Is that so much to ask?



Still Looking for His Valentine

Jax, a beautiful 1-year-old pit bull mix, was picked up as a stray but was never claimed by his previous owner. Like any young dog, Jax would benefit from an obedience class, where this friendly, cooperative, eager-to-please kiddo is sure to excel. Jax is working on his leash manners with the help of shelter volunteers and already knows how to sit when asked. This boy has a world of potential and lots of love to give.

Wags and Purrs

In each issue of the newsletter, we will feature stories of pets adopted from the shelter who are now living in their forever homes. Would you like your shelter pet's story to appear in a future issue? Please contact the newsletter editor at estallmanbrown@verizon.net.

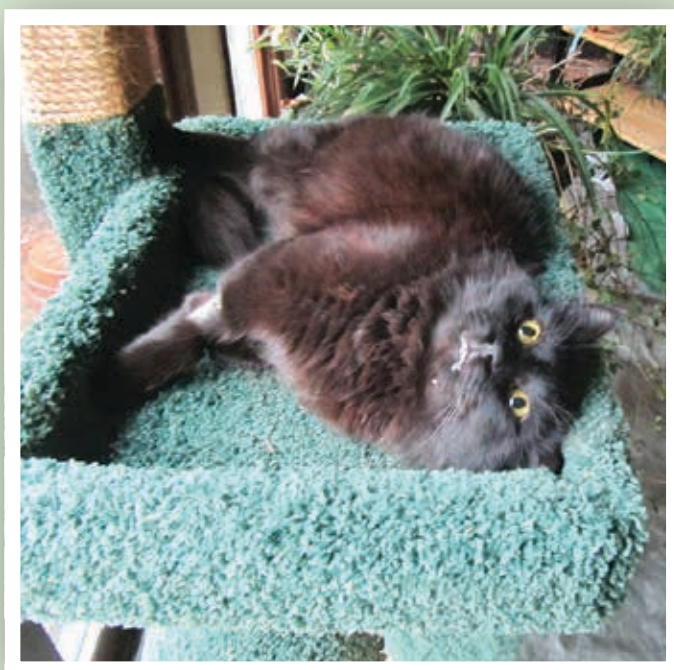


Maddie Grace, Heart Healer

We picked up Maddie, a 1.5-year-old female lab mix, in September 2014 as a stray. Friendly, fun, and full of puppy energy, Maddie had a lot to learn. It may have been for this reason that she was returned to the shelter by her first adopter.

While Maddie waited, once again, at the shelter, Danielle Fuss and her family were recovering from the recent loss of their beloved dog Emma to cancer. "We were heartbroken," says Danielle. But when they met Maddie, they knew right away that it was a perfect match. They adopted her on November 28, 2014.

Maddie fit in with the family from day one. She loves to snuggle and play and is friendly with people and other dogs. "We still miss our Emma," says Danielle, "but we sure love our Maddie Grace. She rescued us as much as we rescued her!"



Hermie Undaunted

It was a simple act, one that could have been the work of a curious child who had no intention of causing harm. Yet when someone put a rubber band around Hermie's left hind leg, this gorgeous young cat surely suffered intense pain. The rubber band must have been on his leg for a long time, because it interfered with circulation to the leg and led to an infection. By the time we picked up this sweet boy as a stray and discovered his injury, it was necessary to amputate his leg to save his life.

But Hermie hasn't let the loss of his leg slow him down one bit. While waiting at the shelter to be adopted, he had no trouble at all jumping onto and off of the shelf in his housing unit to greet visitors and solicit their attention. It didn't take long for this affectionate boy to find his forever home with Chuck Weber.

Chuck describes Hermie as a "real sweetie" and a talkative cat who is learning to respond to his name and is getting to know his adopted feline sister Mabel. Hermie romps wildly around on his three legs with no trouble at all. "He can jump on the bed with ease as well as into the cat tree in the back sunroom, which overlooks the backyard," says Chuck. "He likes spending the afternoon there observing birds, squirrels, and an occasional deer."

Hermie is safe now, soaking up the love he has always deserved, his suffering a thing of the past.

Rex, King of the Cuddle

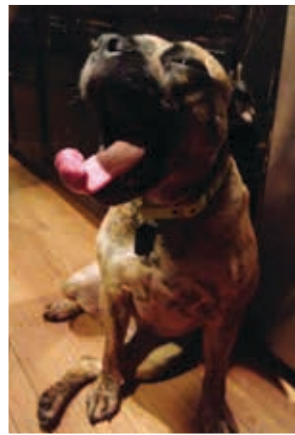


As visitors walked past his kennel at the shelter, Rex would look longingly after them. In response to human attention, the friendly 5-year-old bulldog/pit bull mix practically glowed. His previous family had been forced to give him up for financial reasons. In the face of what must have been a confusing series of changes, Rex remained, according to shelter staff and volunteers, full of joy.

When Kelly Cleaver and her family adopted this beautiful brindle boy in October 2014, they found that, despite his "tough" appearance, Rex is a "gentle giant" whose favorite place is under the blankets at the foot of the bed. "He has been a dream," says Kelly. "He gets along great with both of his doggie brothers. And has

been nothing but gentle with all of our children." He was already well-trained in basic obedience, and they found that he loves to play frisbee.

"We couldn't be more blessed," says Kelly. "Thank you for the opportunity to have such a wonderful pet!"



Lil' P, Down on the Farm

Having lived as a barn cat since he was a kitten, Lil' P is most comfortable living outside. It's not that he's asocial—he begins to purr the moment you touch him and likes to be petted while he eats—he just has a deeply rooted need for open spaces, the smell of cows, the thrill of hunting mice among the hay bales.

When his first owners sold their property in Middleburg, Virginia, Lil' P stayed on the farm. One way or another, he ended up in Frederick and found his way to the shelter in January 2014. Despite his friendliness, this 5- or 6-year-old boy waited for three months at the shelter and was passed over again and again while other shelter cats went to their forever homes.

As the weeks passed, we grew increasingly certain that he needed to get out of his cramped quarters at the shelter. Because

we suspected that he would be happiest living outdoors, we reached out to a rescue group called Tip Me Frederick, which provides resources for the care and management of feral and other free-roaming cats.

In March 2014, Ashley Schaeffer adopted Lil' P from Tip Me Frederick. Since then, he has become part of the family on Ashley's farm and has been enjoying the outdoor life that he craves as well as the care and love that all cats need. "To say that he is a delight to his people and animals is an understatement," says Arlene Atkins of Tip Me Frederick.



Upcoming Events



Spring Rabies Clinic April 12, 2015

Maryland State law requires pet owners to have their dogs, cats, and ferrets aged 4 months and older vaccinated against rabies. What can you do if your pet is due—or overdue—for this vital protection? Come to our spring rabies and microchip clinic on Sunday, April 12th, from 1 to 4 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Just put your cat in a carrier or your dog on a leash and come to the Frederick County Animal Shelter & Pet Adoption Center, 1832 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick, MD 21702. Consider getting your pet microchipped at the same time!

The details:

- Rabies vaccination and 1-year license for each spayed or neutered pet = \$15
- Rabies vaccination and 1-year license for each unspayed or unneutered pet = \$23
- Senior citizen discount available for those aged 65 and over:
\$11 for each spayed/neutered pet
\$15 for each unspayed/unneutered pet
- Multi-year licenses can be purchased for an additional fee
- Microchip and registration = \$15

Even indoor cats need to be protected from rabies! As unlikely as it may seem, rabid bats have been known to enter a home and infect the resident indoor cat. When this happens, the cat is subjected to a long, strict, double-enclosure quarantine, which can last for up to 6 months for a cat who has never had a rabies vaccine.



Open House May 17, 2015

Come on out to the shelter for our annual Open House on Sunday, May 17th, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy food and refreshments, check out our yard sale, and visit exhibits from animal welfare groups and pet-friendly businesses. Kids will enjoy crafts, a moon bounce, and face painting.

Shelter Stats at a Glance (Jul 2014 – Feb 2015)

- 2,963:** Number of animals taken in by shelter (strays and owner-surrendered)
- 892:** Number of animals adopted from shelter
- 402:** Number of stray animals returned to owners

By Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

At age 50-plus and spayed, I'm never going to have children. Since I have no children of my own, I'm also not likely to have grandbabies visiting. So why should I care whether my dogs are good with children? Because children exist.

Wherever you go in today's world, there are likely to be young humans. Unless you plan to keep your dog cloistered in your own home, shut away when friends with children visit, you need to help her be comfortable with children. Your dog's very life could depend on it.

At one time, our culture was far more tolerant of dog bites than it is today. When I was a kid, if a dog bit a child, Mom's response was, "So, what did you do to Nipper to make him bite you?" Children were expected to learn how to respect a dog's space, and if Johnnie acquired a few nicks from a dog's teeth in the process, so be it. Today, one bite, even a minor nip, can be a death sentence for a dog.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are the #1 victim of dog bites in this country. That's no accident. From a dog's perspective, babies and children are weird, unpredictable, and noisy; they move erratically, make long, hard, direct eye contact (a threat in the canine world); often cause pain; compete for food and toys; and don't respond appropriately to a dog's appeasement, deference, or self-defense signals. Since most children aren't allowed to learn by experience that when Nipper stiffens, growls, and curls his lip, the next thing that happens is a snap or bite, kids tend to be oblivious to a dog's warning signals. No wonder dogs perceive children as threatening!

Veterinary behaviorist Dr. Ian Dunbar tells audiences at every opportunity that the best insurance against future dog bites to humans, young *and* old, is puppy socialization. If it's too late for puppy socialization, it's not too late to start playing catch-up with remedial socialization. If you already have a baby, are planning to have one soon, have distant plans for children or, like me, don't *ever* intend to have human puppies, now's the time to start your personal kid-bite insurance program.

Puppy Socialization Time

Puppies go through a critical learning period in the first few months of their lives. During this time, usually between the ages of 4 weeks and 13 weeks, they learn which things in the world are safe and rewarding, which ones are painful and dangerous and should be avoided, and which have no consequence. Anything not experienced during this critical period tends to automatically fall into the "dangerous" category. If a puppy doesn't learn that children are "safe and rewarding" during those critical months, he's likely to assume that they're a threat.



*Above, Lindsey, age 5, uses treats to teach Kaia that kids are safe and rewarding.
At left, Pat Miller.*



Adult Dog Kid-Conditioning

Maybe it's too late to socialize Buffy to babies and children during her critical learning period. That stage of her life has long passed. Is it too late to teach her to live with children? Not necessarily. It's more difficult, but probably not impossible.

If your dog's experiences with children up until now have been neutral and she's otherwise well-socialized, seek out gentle children and have them feed her treats. Watch her closely. If she seems cheerful and happy, continue to find opportunities for her to have positive experiences with kids.

If your dog is tense or nervous with children, take it more slowly. Let her see babies and kids at a distance, and *you* feed her treats. Select a very special treat, like steak or chicken, and feed it to her only in the presence of children and babies. When she notices a child in the distance, steak starts raining from the heavens—tiny tidbits, non-stop. When the child leaves, the flood of steak stops. Every time a child appears, the steak starts. When the child leaves, the steak stops. You want Buffy to think that children and babies, and *only* children and babies, make steak happen.

When Buffy looks at you happily for her steak when she sees a child in the distance, you know she's starting to perceive children as reliable predictors of steak. Your goal is to convince her to like them close up as well, through the continued association with really wonderful food. Gradually move closer to the children, repeating the exercise, always watching her body language to be sure she's comfortable.

Never punish her for showing signs of discomfort or aggression, such as growling, when

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In a perfect world, *every* new puppy would be thoroughly socialized to babies, toddlers, and children while she was in her critical learning period. Despite many veterinarians' recommendations that their clients wrap their puppies in cotton wool and keep them strictly at home until they have been fully vaccinated, it's vitally important that your puppy have positive experiences with the big wide world during her first four months, long *before* she's fully vaccinated. You can do this without exposing Buffy to life-threatening diseases. For example, you could invite lots of people, including babies and children, vaccinated healthy puppies, and friendly dogs, over to your house for puppy parties. Give everyone handfuls of really yummy treats to feed to Buffy. Monitor your pup's interactions with children to be sure they're all positive. Have children of all ages feed Buffy lots of treats and she'll quickly decide that kids are a *good* thing, not dangerous. The goal is to teach her that the small humans of the world are a source of pleasure and reward.

Talk to Us: News from the CAWAC

by Doree Lynn Miles

The Companion Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (CAWAC) was created and approved by the Board of County Commissioners in December 2003 with the first CAWAC members appointed on March 4, 2004.

The mission of the Committee is to ensure that County programs and policies adequately address the welfare of companion animals. To do this, we need to hear from Frederick County residents who have concerns, comments, or questions regarding the shelter and other companion animal welfare issues.

CAWAC meets at least once each quarter, on the second Monday of March, June, September, and December at 7:00 p.m. at the Frederick County Animal Shelter, 1832 Rosemont Avenue, in Frederick. All meetings are open to

the public, and we encourage citizens to attend. If you would like to ask questions or provide input but are unable to attend a CAWAC meeting, you may contact us via email: cawac.info@gmail.com. **We want to hear from you!**

Want to do more? CAWAC welcomes general public representatives with a broad range of companion animal-related experience to volunteer their time to serve on the committee. Application deadlines are announced via public notice several times per year. If you are interested in serving as a committee member—and are a resident of, and registered voter in,

Questions for CAWAC?

Email: cawac.info@gmail.com

Frederick County—you may request an application by calling 301-600-1102 or by emailing fcbgboards@FrederickCountyMD.gov. Frederick County Government does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

■ Doree Lynn Miles is chair of the Companion Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and proud momma to Chloe, who was adopted from the Frederick County Animal Shelter in November 2013.



OH BABY

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children are around. The growl is a critically important warning sign. It's Buffy's way of telling us she's not comfortable around kids. If you punish her and suppress her warning signs, she's far more likely to bite a child one day, severely and without warning. You can't punish her into loving children—you have to use positive conditioning and reinforcement to convince her that kids are good to have around.

The older Buffy is, the longer she's been uncomfortable around children, and the stronger her response to them is, the longer this process, known as counter conditioning and desensitization, will take. Of course, you'll always supervise her around children, even if she loves them. If Buffy's merely tolerant of children, you'll have to supervise much more closely. If she's truly uncomfortable with them, you'll need to confine her in a safe place, such as her crate in your bedroom, where children aren't permitted.

When Baby Makes Four

When a baby is coming to live at your house, your task is more daunting, and more vitally important. As soon as you know Baby's on the way, start helping Buffy adjust. Whatever changes are going to occur in her routine should happen long before Baby arrives, so she won't associate them with the arrival of the new family member. Ideally, you'll keep her as much of a full-fledged member of the family as she is now, finding ways to incorporate her presence into your daily baby routine rather than excluding her. For suggestions in helping to ensure

that the baby transition is a positive one for Buffy, read the full-length version of this article here: <http://www.peaceablepaws.com>.

When Baby arrives, Buffy will be excited to see Mom after she's been away. The day before Mom and Baby come home, have Dad bring home a blanket that's been wrapped around Baby, so it picks up his scent. Show the blanket to Buffy. Let her sniff it, and feed her yummy treats. Then put the blanket in Buffy's bed. When Baby comes home the next day, his scent will already be familiar to her.

When you all get home, have Dad hold Baby outside while Mom goes in to greet Buffy. If Buffy forgets her polite greeting manners in her excitement, she won't hurt Baby, and she won't get yelled at. You don't want her first introduction to Baby to be negative!

Then have Dad come in with Baby, while Mom has treats ready to reward Buffy for greeting Dad and the human puppy nicely. Rather than banishing Buffy to the back yard while everyone settles in, encourage her to lie calmly on her rug, or if necessary, use a tether to keep her out of the midst of chaos until things calm down.

If you've done your homework well, Buffy will soon love Baby as much as you do, and you'll have successfully set the stage for a long and happy relationship between your dog and your child.

■ Pat Miller is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant and Certified Professional Dog Trainer. This article has been excerpted with the author's permission. The full-length article is available at www.peaceablepaws.com.

MAYA

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bilitation and the other in orthopedic surgery. But another factor came into play in her family's decision, says Dr. Lotsikas: "There is so much pain and ugliness in our society, and I looked at Maya, knowing it was a very very tiny good deed to do, but made the choice to give her a try in our family." After one trial weekend, Dr. Lotsikas and her family knew that Maya belonged with them and that they would commit to her for the rest of her life. They adopted Maya in September 2014.

Today, Maya uses her right front leg nearly 100% of the time. Because she still knuckles over onto her wrist at times, she continues to wear a brace, but only on hard surfaces, like crunchy snow and ice. To fully fuse the carpus and to allow Maya to engage in any level of exercise without discomfort, she will need one more surgery—but not quite yet. "We want her to have time to adjust to us, gain trust, and feel secure before another big medical undertaking," explains Dr. Lotsikas.

Maya is "amazing," according to her adoptive family: "Our cats cuddle up to her, and she and Kelsea are starting to play together. She sleeps under the covers. She has major stranger danger alerting and is quite defensive of herself if in a crate or cage, but is light years away from where she started. The best thing is seeing her run—head up, full speed ahead, using four legs."

■ Contributors: Faith Lotsikas, DVM, CCRT, Faithful Paws Veterinary; Linda Shea, Acting Director, FCAC; and Sharon Thomas, DVM, FCAC

RESCUE ME



By Felicia Langel, DVM

There are many animal-friendly ways to adopt a pet, including from family or friends, from the local animal shelter or humane society, and from a rescue group. The first two options are fairly self-explanatory, but what exactly is a rescue group, and what should you know before adopting a pet from one?

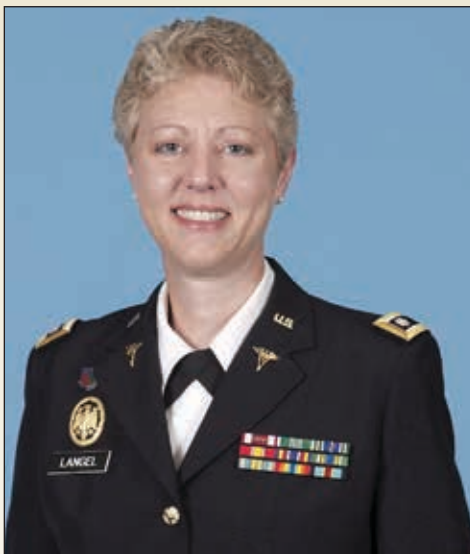
A rescue group is a private organization made up of like-minded animal lovers who take in homeless pets; arrange for the temporary care of these animals in foster homes or, for those with a central facility, within a kennel or shelter environment; and attempt to match them with suitable adopters. The individuals involved in a rescue group are nearly always volunteers. The animals may come from municipal or county-run shelters or they may be relinquished directly to the rescue group by a previous owner.

Most rescue groups focus on a certain type of pet, such as a particular species, breed, size, or age. Rescue groups are often, but not always, incorporated as approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Most rescue groups are local or regional; some are national or, less commonly, international. They often work with municipal shelters and humane organizations. Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center (FCAC) works closely with several rescue groups in the county and can provide interested residents with a listing of these organizations.

Common to all rescue groups is the goal of saving adoptable pets . . . not making money.

Why Adopt from a Rescue Group?

Since rescue groups tend to specialize in certain types of pets, their staff tend to be very knowledgeable about the pets they adopt out. For first-time pet owners, or people who are less familiar with certain types of animals, rescue groups are a great source of information and will work hard to carefully match the pet with the owner. Typically, rescue groups know the temperament, quirks, and history of each animal in their care. They can, therefore, advise potential adopters about a pet's health, its behavior, and its previous family experience. Also, pets from rescue groups will have been screened by a veterinarian and are likely to be current on vaccines, free of parasites, and spayed or



Dr. Felicia Langel

neutered.

Many municipal shelters, like FCAC, provide a similar level of care and information, especially for long-term shelter residents. Depending on your circumstances, preferences, and experience, a shelter can be an equally good or better option for seeking your next pet.

How to Choose a Rescue Group

It is wise to do some homework before engaging with a rescue group. This is for your protection and for the protection of pets. Some rescue groups are fronts for selling stolen pets, animals obtained from puppy mills, or pets from hoarding situations. A well-run rescue group will be incorporated as a nonprofit and will operate like a small business, but will not turn a profit.

The best rescue groups earn the trust of potential adopters by being completely transparent about their operations. Specifically, the group should provide contact information on its website, and staff members should return phone calls and emails. A rescue should readily answer questions about how it obtains animals, how it treats the animals in its care, and its adoption procedures. A rescue with a central facility should allow visitors. A trustworthy rescue group also has a strong, long-term relationship with a veterinarian.

If you encounter a rescue group that doesn't meet the majority of these basic qual-

ifications, be suspicious. And if you have real concerns about the health and welfare of animals in the care of a particular group, notify FCAC of your concerns.

The Adoption Process

After screening and selecting a rescue group, expect to be screened in return. Rescue groups want the best for the animals in their care and will adopt only to an owner who is the best match for the pet. Rescue group adoption procedures often include a lengthy application that details the potential owner's previous pet experience, current home situation, relationship with a veterinarian, and references. The rescue group may require a home visit before approving an application.

Once approved, the rescue group will suggest available pets and offer a meet and greet for the pet and the potential adopter. If a match is made, the adopter will pay a fee that covers veterinary care (vaccines, deworming, spay/neuter) and sign a contract that requires the owner to return the pet to the rescue group if things don't work out.

Final Thoughts

If you're not currently looking for a pet but want to help a particular rescue group—maybe one from which you previously adopted an animal, or one whose philosophy meshes closely with your own—you may wish to engage with that group in other ways. Rescue groups welcome volunteers to help communicate with and process the applications of potential adopters; individuals willing to help care for pets housed at a central facility; fosters to temporarily house and care for a pet until it can be adopted into a permanent home; and donors, of large and small amounts, who can collectively help pay for the medical care, food, and shelter of rescued animals.

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